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# Economic and Social Council

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**Commission for Social Development**
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Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: social integration**

## Statement submitted by AARP, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.5/2009/1.

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**Statement**

AARP is honored to be participating in the 47th Session of the United Nations (UN) Commission for Social Development. We are pleased to be joining government delegations and scores of civil society organizations for deliberations on this session's priority theme: social integration.

AARP strongly urges that these deliberations on social integration pay special attention to the rapidly aging population worldwide and carefully consider intergenerational approaches when discussing policies which seek to: increase the participation and integration of social groups; reduce inequalities; and promote access to basic social services, education, and health care for all.

On behalf of the AARP membership, I would like to congratulate the UN for its unstinting commitment to these issues. AARP stands ready to offer our expertise, advice, and experience to these deliberations. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of 40 million members whose mission is to enhance the quality of life for all as we age. AARP has collaborated with the UN for 35 years by participating in major conferences and helping to forge an international constituency on aging.

Since its founding in 1958, AARP has served as a primary source of global information and advocacy on issues affecting aging populations by organizing policy discussions, disseminating research, and strengthening the network of opinion leaders, policymakers, and advocates who believe that everyone should age with dignity and purpose. AARP has held consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council for over 20 years.

Ten years ago, the General Assembly, through Resolution 47/5, decided to observe the year 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons. This observance was celebrated by all sectors of society, in all corners of the globe. The International Year of Older persons was celebrated in recognition of humanity's demographic coming of age and the promise it held for maturing attitudes and capabilities in social, economic, and cultural contexts, not least for global peace and development in this 21st century.

AARP will, in cooperation with the UN Programme on Ageing, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, host a series of briefings on global aging during the Commission for Social Development. These briefings will commemorate the 10th anniversary of the International Year of Older Persons, recognize the achievements made in the last ten years, and consider the challenges that lie ahead. The AARP-UN Global Aging Briefing Series will bring together government delegates, NGOs, foundations, and academics to discuss the theme of the Commission for Social Development, "Social Integration," and its relation to older persons.

A framework to promote the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (The Madrid Plan) will also be considered. The Madrid Plan was adopted by over 150 countries six years ago at the Second World Assembly on Ageing "to respond to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in the twenty-first century and to promote the development of a society for all ages." The International Year of Older Persons and the Madrid Plan, represent key milestones on aging policies for the UN.

As the Commission for Social Development deliberates on policies to increase the participation and integration of social groups and seek to reduce inequalities, we take this moment to reiterate the important overarching goal of the Madrid Plan. The Madrid Plan requests that national governments translate the important objectives and recommended actions of the Madrid Plan into national policies and practices that impact positively on the lives of older people.

The UN plan for monitoring the Madrid Plan's implementation is based on a qualitative "bottom-up" approach. Our governments are not being asked to provide a quantitative appraisal of how they have implemented the Madrid Plan but, rather, all stakeholders — including governments, non-governmental organizations and representatives of civil society — have been encouraged to participate in the review process by providing qualitative data on implementation in their respective communities and countries.

In order to address the information needs of all the stakeholders in the review process, AARP is collaborating with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs to identify significant trends in aging as well as to provide necessary information on the "qualitative techniques" for Madrid Plan implementation. Our annual AARP-UN Briefing Series on Global Aging is integral to this process.

Because the rapidly increasing numbers of older citizens are presenting our nations and our governments with enormous new social and economic challenges, we have been compelled to address difficult questions such as, "What sort of social contract do our governments hold with our citizens?" and "Are our social contracts in need of modification?" We live in an interdependent and interconnected world, and as we continue to face a severe global financial crisis, these challenges and questions will become even more critical. In many countries, the economic crisis already threatens to become a social crisis with great impact particularly on older members of society.

AARP recognizes that each nation clearly has its own unique challenges and will require policies and programs tailored to its own particular needs. But, clearly, the time has come for us to move forward from discussing the challenges to developing and implementing policies to deal with their impact on the future security and dignity of our citizens. At each step along the way, AARP will remain committed to creating a society for all ages.